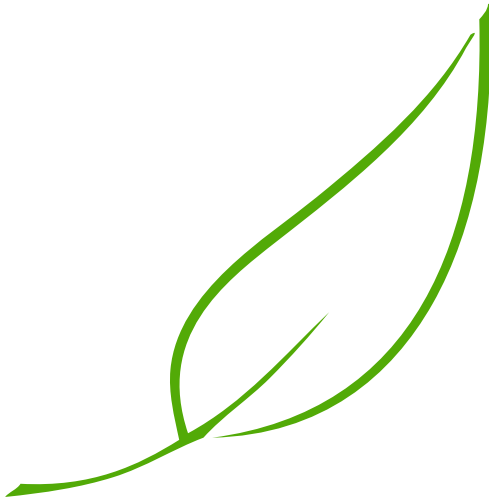


THE HAWK AND THE SPARROW

by Robert L. Crowe



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There are two chairs on stage. During the scene the characters will stand on the chairs, stand next to the chairs or sit depending upon the motivation. At open, the Hawk is standing on a chair. His position represents a high tree branch. He is constantly searching the ground for movement. The Hawk is a serious rugged animal. The Sparrow flutters in. He is intelligent and talkative.

SPARROW: Hi! Anybody sitting here?

HAWK: *(looks at him with some disdain)* I guess not. Have a perch.

SPARROW: I don't eat fish.

HAWK: Huh? What?

SPARROW: Oh ... I have a delightful sense of humor. See, perch has more than one meaning. It's a place to sit and it's a kind of fish.

HAWK: *(without emotion)* Oh. Sure. Have a perch.

SPARROW: *(sits)* Do you eat fish?

HAWK: No. I think you are confusing me with an eagle. I'm a hawk.

SPARROW: I'm a sparrow. *[Note: If you want to do this part with a British accent, use the line: "I'm an English sparrow."]*

HAWK: Yes, I know.

SPARROW: What are you doing?

HAWK: Looking for something to eat.

SPARROW: You mean looking for something to kill.

HAWK: *(slowly turns head to the smaller bird)* Yeah.

SPARROW: Did you ever wonder about that? I mean, why do you suppose you have to kill things? Why don't you eat nuts and berries? There are a lot of good things around. I eat seeds and things, and get along just fine. Look at me.

HAWK: *(looks him up and down)* I think you answered your own question.

SPARROW: You know what I think it is? Size.

HAWK: Size?

SPARROW: Size. Think about it. I hang out with a bunch of guys my own size. There are nut hatches ... they're really nut jobs, very nervous ... and cardinals and finches. We all eat seeds and stuff like that. But, when you get bigger like hawks and eagles and gulls ... you ever know any gulls? They have some very nasty habits. Anyway, the bigger they get the more they turn to mayhem and murder. The big fish eat the little fish; the bigger fish eat the big fish. The gulls eat the small fish and eagles eat the big fish. When they get bigger, they all start killing something.

HAWK: *(sits)* I'm getting headache.

SPARROW: Maybe it's your conscience. Maybe it's *regret* manifesting itself as a migraine.

HAWK: No.

SPARROW: No?

HAWK: No. It's you.

SPARROW: I'm not trying to start an argument. Look at us. Why would I? All I am doing is raising a question: "Why is the entire animal kingdom based upon death?" *(slight pause)* Huh? Have you ever spent time thinking about that system?

HAWK: No.

SPARROW: No?

HAWK: No. I spend all my time hunting. I have no interest in eating a gooseberry for dinner. I got a big appetite. When I start my day, I'm hungry and I usually spend all day finding enough to eat. That may sound a little brutal to you but it's what I do.

SPARROW: What are you looking for now? Anything special?

HAWK: Yes ... anything that moves.

SPARROW: *(laughs)* I'm moving.

HAWK: Yep. There are some hawks that eat sparrows. *(Sparrow scoots chair a few inches away.)* But I don't. *(Sparrow breathes a sigh of relief and scoots chair back to original position.)* Unless I'm really hungry. *(Sparrow is wide-*

eyed again and moves chair away again.) (Hawk moves suddenly, staring into the distance.)

SPARROW: *(recoils in fear)* Whoa!

HAWK: Easy, there, fluffy. I'm not that hungry. I thought I saw a snake moving off in the distance but it was just the wind teasing me. *(returns to former place on the tree)* You ever been hungry, sparrow? I mean, really hungry?

SPARROW: Well. I guess not. I can always find something to eat.

HAWK: See, that's the difference. I not only have to spot something to eat, I have to find a way to catch it. Sometimes I go for days without getting anything. It's a tough life.

SPARROW: Yeah, well you got some pretty lethal weapons there. I guess I never saw a hawk really up close. Those claws and the beak are really something.

HAWK: It helps to have some weapons but no one knows about the strategy. I guess a lot animals look at us as just big, dumb birds that use brute strength to get what we want. It's not all muscle. There are tactics, you know.

SPARROW: No, I didn't know. What kind of tactics?

HAWK: For example, I have to watch where the sun is. If I fly in from the wrong direction, the subject could see my shadow and ...zip ... it jumps in a hole, or changes speed or goes another direction. I have to gage wind velocity and currents. Brute strength isn't always enough. Sometimes you just have to out-smart 'em.

SPARROW: Hey ... do you frequently team-up with another hawk? You know ... plan your strategy? I can see how that would be very effective. So, do you ever cooperate?

HAWK: Sure, but it depends on the situation. We get more creative when it gets hungry. See that hill over there? There is a red-tail that lives in that big tree. We work together on larger targets, like a rabbit, for example.

There are two major problems with rabbits: First ... they are fast and change direction quickly. Also, if they stop in a pile of brush we can't get at them. So, we take turns diving at the beast to keep the rabbit running until it gets tired. It is easier when they get tired. If a dumb bunny stops in a brush pile, then "red"



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